



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: August 5, 2008

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Water Resources Division, Public Works Department

SUBJECT: Desalination Facility Rehabilitation Planning Study

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council authorize the Public Works Director to negotiate and execute a contract with Carollo Engineers, in a form approved by the City Attorney, in an amount not to exceed \$122,000 for preparation of a planning study to assess cost, feasibility, and regulatory issues associated with potential future rehabilitation of the City's desalination facility.

DISCUSSION:

BACKGROUND

The Charles Meyer Desalination Facility was permitted, built, and operated as a temporary emergency water supply in response to the severe drought of the late 1980's. The constructed capacity was 7,500 acre-feet per year (AFY), with infrastructure sized for up to 10,000 AFY. Approximately half of the original 7,500 AFY capacity was dedicated to two neighboring water purveyors, both of which opted out of the project at the end of the five-year contract with Ionics Inc. At that time, the facility was acquired by the City and underwent a second environmental review and Coastal Development Permit (CDP) process to make it a permanent part of the City's water supply at a capacity of 3,125 (AFY). The CDP for the permanent facility identified four operating scenarios ranging from 3,125 AFY, as identified in the City's Long Term Water Supply Program (LTWSP), up to 10,000 AFY for potential regional use.

The equipment originally dedicated to the neighboring water agencies was subsequently sold, leaving a capacity of 3,125 AFY. For approximately the past ten years, the facility has been maintained in a "storage" mode rather than a "ready" mode to minimize maintenance costs. Wetter than average weather and reduced demand compared to pre-drought levels precluded the need to use the facility during this period; however, it remains part of the City's current LTWSP and is important as a drought water supply.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Assessment of the City's water supplies is an important component of the ongoing Plan Santa Barbara process. The proposed desalination study is one of a number of analyses to be made in support of the environmental review for the Plan Santa Barbara process and the LTWSP update, which is expected to follow the Plan Santa Barbara process. The objectives of the study are to:

- Evaluate the technical and regulatory issues related to rehabilitating the desalination facility;
- Develop updated cost estimates for rehabilitation, operation and maintenance, regulatory compliance, and the energy component of operations;
- Assess the timeframe to accomplish rehabilitation when needed;
- Identify any potential regulatory issues; and
- Conceptually identify improvements that could be made to the existing facility as a part of rehabilitation to improve performance, minimize energy use, or reduce costs.

Staff issued a Request for Proposals to a number of firms who perform this type of work. Of the six proposals received and evaluated, staff selected the proposal by Carollo Engineers as best addressing the particular needs of the City on this project.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

The initial phase of the work will be to investigate the facility's condition, develop preliminary cost estimates for rehabilitation, review regulatory issues, and identify specific issues for more extensive follow-up testing and analysis, as approved by the Public Works Director. This follow-up phase is expected to be necessary to provide a suitable level of accuracy in the cost estimates and address new issues identified during the initial phase. The total contract authorization would be for a maximum of \$122,000 for both phases. Funds for the study are available in the 2009 Water Fund Operating Budget. The matter was reviewed by the Water Commission on July 14, 2008 at which time the Commission voted to support staff's recommendation as provided above.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

Having a reliable water supply is critical to Santa Barbara residents. Understanding the role that desalination plays in providing a sustainable water supply is important to updating the LTWSP and the General Plan.

PREPARED BY: Rebecca Bjork, Acting Water Resources Manager/BF/spm

SUBMITTED BY: Christine F. Andersen, Public Works Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office